GEORGE BELLOWS, N. A., PAINTS "THE CALL OF THE CITY"

"THE KNOCK-OUT"—IN THE WHITNEY-RICHARDS GALLERIES.
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GEORGE BELLOWS.

"THE CLIFF DWELLERS"—IN WHITNEY-RICHARDS GALLERIES.
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GEORGE BELLOWS, who has been carrying off the National Academy prizes for the past two years for the best portraiture in the exhibitions, has heard "the call of the city" and is painting New York. All phases of city life, the East Side tenements, the North River docks, prize fights, Billy Sunday, the circus, Central Park and the war news of the bulletin boards, all are finding expression in his brush.

"Give me a wilderness or a city—there is much the same bigness of life in both," he says: contending, "If I live in a wilderness I'd paint wilderness. I paint New York because I live in it."

And so in his collection of pictures at the Whitney-Richards Galleries in the Holland House there is New York in a dozen phases of emotional realism and sensation, with some of the finest portraits he has painted.

The romance of New York as Mr. Bellows finds it is that down the vista of its West Side streets the masts of ships that sail to foreign ports and the glint of waters can be sighted—and he has painted all types of longshore pictures of the New York docks. His "North River" won the second Hallgarten prize in 1908; his "Rain on the River" honorable mention at the Buenos Ayres Exposition in 1911; his "Men of the Docks" the Sesnan medal of the Pennsylvania Academy in 1911; his "River Front" the gold medal of the Panama Exposition this year, while his latest picture of the New York docks, "Cloudy Day," has its first showing at the present exhibition.

His "Cliff Dwellers," of the New York tenements, received the medal of the third class at Carnegie Institute last year, and "The Circus" the year before received honorable mention. The psychology of New York crowds he has dealt with in "The Circus," in "Billy Sunday" and in his prize fight studies, notably "The Knock Out."

George Bellows is a Western man, from Ohio, a great, tall, raw boned, blue eyed fellow in the thirties, who has a carpenter shop as well as a studio in his home in Nineteenth street, where he finds recreation from the palette in hammer and saw.

"I paint New York because I live in it," he continued, "and because the most essential thing for me to paint is the life about me, the things I feel to-day and that are part of the life of to-day.

"To me," said Mr. Bellows, "art is an interpretation of life. It may be art in pictures or in music or in literature, but whatever the form of expression is, art must tell a story. It must concern itself with life. It must have a 'message,' as they say. And to be of value that message must be the truth about life as the artist sees it, not a copy of the way another man may see life. It is just in the proportion that a man expresses life as he sees it that his message is of value. For no two brains are alike, no two sets of perceptions. Nature makes no duplicates.

"Therefore the way every real interpreter of life sees the world about him must be different. It must have what we call 'originality.' I don't mean that one man sees two horizontal lines where another sees the same lines perpendicular. But that every man has his own focus on the world about him and his value to the world is just in proportion to the truth he gets out of life through the medium of his own soul.

"Anybody can learn technique, just as anybody with normal brain can learn to read and write. The possession of technique by an artist is understood. It may not occur to you that speaking and writing are arts—they are so common. But the technique of drawing and painting are merely arts equal to speaking and writing. Probably in primitive ages speech came before pictures. But the ideograph, the picture language, we may be sure, came before the language of written letters.

"The man having arrived at such technique as enables him to write a letter or make a drawing, however, is just at the beginning of expression. Technique, the mere canons of his art, should never be allowed to stand in the way, to limit or to obstruct the more important thing, what a man has to say in his work. Technique is just a tool, a means to an end. If a man has something to say that can't be said in terms of known technique, he should invent a new way to say it, a new way to paint it. The main thing is what he has to say.

"'I am looking for news,' wrote Horace Traubel in an article that made a great impression on me. Every artist is looking for news. He is a great reporter of life, keeping his eyes open for some hitherto untold piece of reality to put on his canvas. His picture chooses him. He doesn't choose what he shall paint any more than a writer chooses the news that shall happen or the idea that shall possess him.

"It is a matter of feeling. The test of my success with a picture, to me, is whether I have been able to make other people feel from the picture what I felt from the reality. Even so abstract a message as a landscape may have is still an expression of feeling. My pictures are all expressions of emotional realism—of feeling about life to-day—whether they are portraits or character studies or street scenes or prize fights or landscapes or any mortal thing. You see, I am a radical in my conviction that anything in life that is worth telling has a right to a place in art. I am not academic," and he laughed.

"But when I try to paint emotion, to put feeling into a picture, I put a story in my work—the story of the emotion. There are painters, you know, who are trying to paint emotion by certain arrangements and relations of color masses, eliminating representation as far as possible—I refer to the modernists. They try to get the same emotional reflexes from paint and canvas placed in harmonic orders or relations, without regard to representations, that the musical composer tries for in harmonic proportions of sound and time. It is an important idea.

"Many pictures are analogous to music, if you will notice it. In fact, this analogy is at least an element in all fine painting. Music is perhaps the subtlest way of conveying feeling. If you put a feeling into music, perhaps it reaches the brain more intimately through the nerves of sound perception than a feeling in painting can reach through the optic nerves. But of this I know nothing—I leave it to the scientists. However, intervals in music—in other words, time—correspond with space or line in pictorial art. There you get rhythm in a picture and a close analogy with music as an expression of feeling.

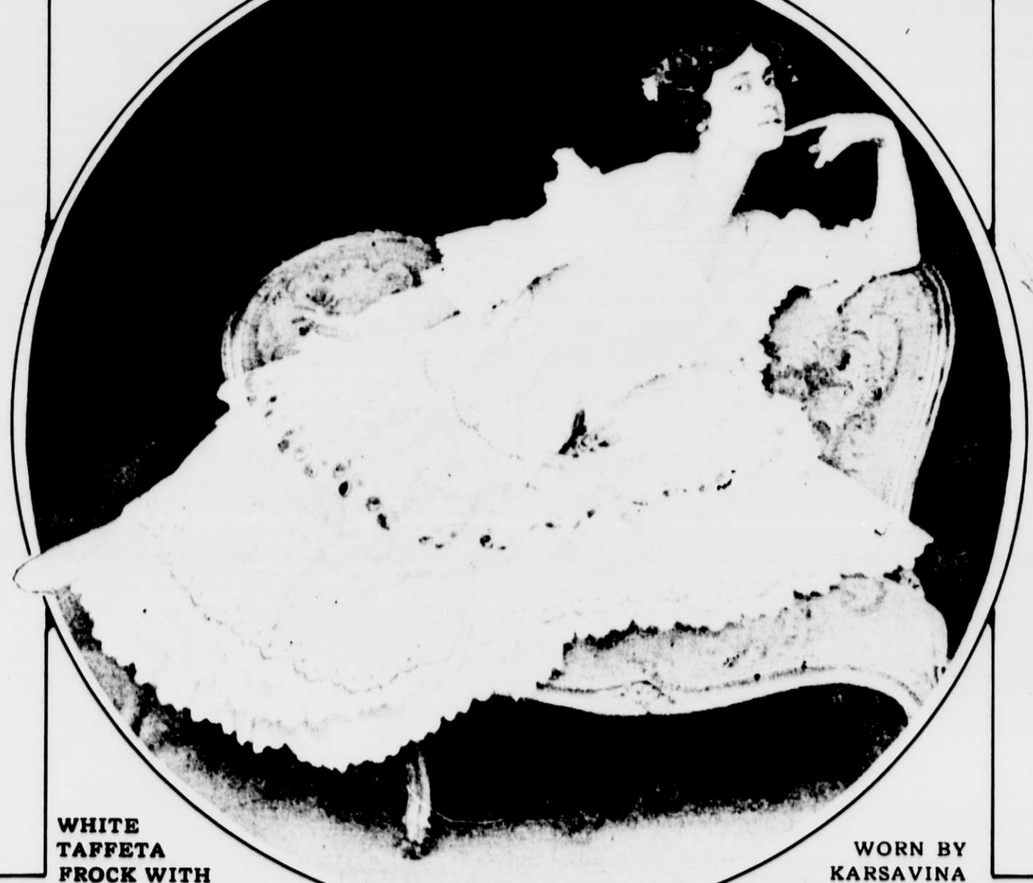
"I find the forms of drama in painting, too. You know the wonderful etchings of the French cartoonist Daumier. He was an Edwin Booth in the art world. That man had a keen human perception that saw the subtle things at the bottom of a man's soul and put them, through his art, into little marks on paper, laid them out before the eyes of the world in his cartoons—just as Booth in his acting, face, attitude, gesture, impersonation entire, brought out into the limelight the subtleties of Shakespeare's characters. Then Rembrandt was the Shakespeare of painting, a great dramatist on canvas. And I could go on and parallel the masters of art and literature, the reporters of emotion, the interpreters of life."

Mr. Bellows says he makes pictures of prize fights because, of all sports, it offers more concentrated emotion and a more picturesque focus and unity in its large moments. "All sport is cruel, if you come to that," he said. "For one side's victory presupposes the other side's defeat. But in baseball or football, where the game covers a large area and the play is diffused, it is difficult to focus a point in the game that tells the story. In a prize fight interest centres on the two men. There is effective drama in its big moment of victory and defeat. And I have the average man's interest in all sports."

Billy Sunday and his audiences have been dealt with by Mr. Bellows in two pictures, one of them a Hogarthian study of "revival" hysteria.

BEWARE THE BAKST MOTIF IN FEMININE NEGLIGEE---IT'S ON ITS WAY

BAKST'S IDEA OF THE ULTRA FEMININE—GOWN DESIGNED FOR THAMAR KARSAVINA IN "PAPILLONS." Copyright Berlin Photographic Company.



WHITE TAFFETA FROCK WITH BORDER OF CHERRIES, WORN BY KARSAVINA IN "CARNIVAL."

IN the evolution of the feminine negligee from the ugly wrapper and Mother Hubbard to the adorably frivolous boudoir creations of to-day Dame Fashion often has gone to the stage for inspiration. Puccini's "Madame Butterfly" left a wake of kimonos ranging from the delectable to the atrocious.

Already there is beginning to be felt the Greek influence, induced by the Bakst settings for Grecian dramas presented by Serge de Diaghileff's Ballet Russe. The Bakst negligee is on the way.

When one of the nymphs in "L'Apres Midi d'un Faune" is seen at the Century Theatre next January in this Bakst costume, modern nymphs may soon be disporting themselves in similar costumes, but in the privacy of their homes. In spite of the Bakst influence, it is seldom that a Bakst costume can be taken over bodily, colors as well as lines; but while no one but the Duncans would care to appear in this faun's garb on Fifth avenue, its rumblings as a boudoir robe already can be heard.

COSTUME FOR A NYMPH IN "APRIS MIDI D'UN FAUNE," DESIGNED BY BAKST.
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